

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MUSCAT 00895 100527Z

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 DODE-00 PM-03 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 /033 W

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R 100444Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1369

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 895

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MU

SUBJECT: REQUEST BY HESS AND EISENHARDT INTERNATIONAL, LIMITED
FOR USAF TRANSPORT OF ARMORED LIMOUSINES TO OMAN

REF: STATE 184151

1. OUR FIRST SUGGESTION IS THAT DEPT ADVISE HESS AND EISENHARDT TO DOUBLE-CHECK FEASIBILITY OFFLOADING LIMOUSINES AT MUSCAT AIRPORT FROM STANDARD COMMERCIAL TRANSPORT SUCH AS 707. OUR UNDERSTANDING IS THAT AIRPORT POSSESSES NEW "HIGH LOADER" WITH CAPACITY AT LEAST 8,000 POUNDS, THOUGH NEW "MAIN DECK LOADER" WITH GREATER CAPACITY NOT EXPECTED UNTIL ABOUT DECEMBER. OBVIOUSLY IT SHOULD BE HESS AND EISENHARDT'S RESPONSIBILITY, NOT OURS, TO DO SUCH DOUBLE-CHECKING FOR ONLY THEY HAVE PRECISE INFORMATION ABOUT WEIGHT AND CHARACTERISTICS THIS CARGO AND ABOUT TYPES OF CHARTER AIRCRAFT AVAILABLE.

2. WE SHARE SOME CONCERN THAT USE OF USAF TRANSPORT IN THIS INSTANCE MIGHT CAUSE CRITICISM, THOUGH WE QUESTION WHETHER THIS WOULD BE SIGNIFICANT IN THIS INSTANCE PROVIDED (AS WE ASSUME IS CASE) COMPANY OR OMANGOV ITSELF IS FOOTING ENTIRE TRANSPORT BILL. THERE SEEMS RELATIVELY LITTLE CHANCE THAT ADVERSE REACTION WOULD BE GENERATED WITHIN OMAN ITSELF, THOUGH SOME ALERT AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT IN AREA OR VISITING HERE NEAR TIME OF NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS MIGHT PUBLICIZE MATTER.

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3. IN SECURITY TERMS, THERE ARE TO OUR KNOWLEDGE NO RPT NO

SPECIAL OR UNUSUAL RISK FACTORS AT THIS TIME, OR PROJECTED FOR NOVEMBER 1975, THAT MAKE THIS YEAR'S CELEBRATIONS SHAPE UP AS SPECIAL PROBLEM. THIS OF COURSE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT ANY TIME. LAST YEAR SULTAN QABOOS MADE EXTENSIVE USE OF HELICOPTER TRANSPORT IN ATTENDING WEEK-LONG NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS; WE WOULD GUESS HE WILL DO THE SAME THIS NOVEMBER, GIVEN TIME AND DISTANCES INVOLVED, WHETHER ARMORED LIMOUSINE FLEET IS AVAILABLE OR NOT. IN ANY CASE, WE RATE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SULTAN'S PHYSICAL SECURITY AS VERY GOOD.

4. NO OMANI OFFICIAL HAS RAISED THIS SUBJECT WITH EMBASSY AT ANY TIME. WE WONDER WHETHER SULTAN HIMSELF HAS SPECIFICALLY SAID HE WANTS VEHICLES DELIVERED IN TIME FOR NOVEMBER OR WHETHER SOMEONE ON HIS STAFF HAS TAKEN IT UPON HIMSELF TO SET THIS DEADLINE. WE OF COURSE DO NOT KNOW WHAT CONTRACT PROVIDES REGARDING DELIVERY.

5. BASED ON THE ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS, WE CANNOT IN GOOD CONSCIENCE RECOMMEND A POSITIVE DEPARTMENT FINDING THAT IT IS "IN OUR NATIONAL INTEREST" TO PROVIDE REQUESTED TRANSPORTATION. WOLLE

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